

How Classroom Seating Arrangements Affect Classroom Learning Environments

Tara Harsin



College of Education



- Professional Development School Student Teacher
- Riverside Elementary School, Boise School District
- “Learning to Care, Caring to Learn”
- The purpose of this research was to collect information on student preference of classroom seating arrangements, and how it affects their learning.
- Research Questions:
 - ✓ What seating arrangement do students prefer?
 - ✓ How can seating affect learning?
 - ✓ What possible seating arrangements are there?

Sources used

Armstrong, Thomas (1994). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Holtrop (1997). Writing lesson plans: seating arrangements. Retrieved March 1, 2009, from Huntington College Web site: <http://www.huntington.edu/education/lessonplanning/seating.htm>

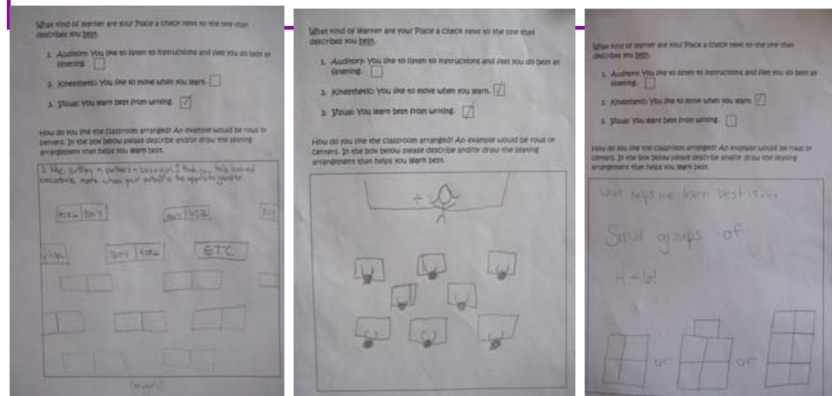
Tobias, Cynthia Ulrich (1994). *They Way They Learn*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Focus on the Family Publishing.

Key Quotes

- ✓ “Not everyone benefits from the same circumstances and surroundings when it is necessary to concentrate and work” (Tobias, 1994).
- ✓ “The learning environment should be designed according to learning objectives and desired outcomes not just habit or a janitor’s best guess” (Holtrop, 1997).

Methodology

I began my research by collecting data from a fourth, fifth and sixth grade classroom. Each student was given a voluntary survey to take home and complete. These students then returned the surveys to a folder that was placed in a specific location in their classroom. In the survey (see below) they were asked what type of learner they believed themselves to be as well as what type of seating arrangement worked best for them. Samples are provided below to provide an idea of the range of responses. Approximately eighty students were given the survey and fifty were returned.

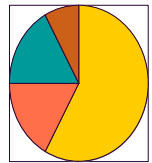


Conclusion

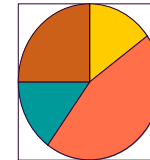
There is no conclusion linking a specific seating style to one type of learner. If compared it is easy to see visual learners work best in any seating arrangement. Kinesthetic learners work better in groups and auditory learners work well in rows. In my small sample of students I was able to conclude students are unique learners and there is a wide variety of preference in any given classroom.

*Findings not generalizable due to small sample, but important for personal professional growth

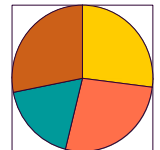
Kinesthetic



Auditory



Visual



Reflection

By actively participating in research I learned the underlying importance of gathering information in order to improve myself as an educator. In this specific research, I was able to better understand the preference of students in terms of seating arrangements and how they learn best.

“For most Americans, the word ‘classroom’ conjures up an image of students sitting in neat rows of desks facing the front of the room, where a teacher either sits at a large desk correcting papers or stands near a blackboard lecturing to students. This is certainly one way to organize a classroom, but it is by no means the only way or the best way.” (Armstrong, 1994)